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wrongs. In our judgment, no documents issued from the executive departments of our government are more interesting, or more deserving of general attention, than the Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and the accompanying documents. These latter consist of the reports of the several superintendents, agents, and teachers. No one can peruse them without becoming deeply interested in the condition of the Indians.

May we not hope that Congress, before the present session expires, will give candid and patient deliberation to the duties and interests involved in this important subject?

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- ART. V. — 1. *George Canning and his Times*. By AUGUSTUS GRANVILLE STAPLETON. London: John W. Parker and Son. 1859. 8vo. pp. xviii. and 614.
2. *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin: comprising the celebrated Political and Satirical Poems, Parodies, and Jeux d'Esprit of the RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING and others*. With Explanatory Notes by CHARLES EDMONDS. Second Edition, considerably enlarged. With six Etchings by the famous Caricaturist JAMES GILLRAY. London: G. Willis. 1854. 16mo. pp. xvi. and 248.
3. *The Speeches of the RIGHT HONORABLE GEORGE CANNING*. With a Memoir of his Life by R. THERRY, ESQ., of Gray's Inn, Barrister at Law. London: James Ridgway. 1828. 6 vols. 8vo.

MR. STAPLETON was for several years private secretary to Mr. Canning, and he is also known as the author of a "Political Life of Canning from 1822 to his Death." This work, which was published nearly thirty years since, is a production of ability, and the authenticity of its materials renders it of permanent value; but it is fragmentary in design, and partisan in tone. "George Canning and his Times" is based partly on personal recollections and partly on Mr. Canning's private papers, and it is open to the same criticism as the earlier

biography. It omits all reference to Canning's school and college life, and takes up the narrative only on his removal from Oxford. Its materials, though valuable, are ill-digested ; it contains much irrelevant matter ; and it is written in a partisan spirit. From many of the author's opinions we totally dissent, and some of his statements we must pronounce utterly unfounded. But the discussion of these matters is altogether alien to our present purpose ; and we take leave of the volume with the single remark, that its real and permanent value consists in its copious citations from the Canning Papers. A thorough, exact, and impartial record of Mr. Canning's life and services is a desideratum still to be supplied.

Nevertheless several attempts have been made to furnish a satisfactory memorial of him ; and, in the early part of 1830, negotiations were opened with the poet Moore with a view to the preparation of such a Life. At first the proposal seemed very inviting to Moore, on account of the importance of the period, the abundance of the materials, his general coincidence with the principles of Canning's latter line of politics, and the pecuniary advantage which he would derive from the undertaking. "But upon coming to consider the matter more closely," he says in his Diary, "an obstacle presented itself in the person of Lord Grey, which at once put an end to the whole speculation. The decided hostility in which he and Canning were placed during the period in question would make it wholly impossible for me to enter into the subject, without such a *dégré* of freedom in speaking of the conduct of Lord Grey as both my high opinion of him, and my gratitude to him for much kindness, would render impossible." The proposal was accordingly declined ; and since that time several Lives of Canning have appeared without exhausting the subject. Their writers did not have access to much unpublished material, and the works do not demand special notice.

Of the other works mentioned above it is only necessary to say that the little volume edited by Mr. Edmonds contains all the poetry of the Anti-Jacobin, with much illustrative matter, and that Mr. Therry's edition of Canning's Speeches includes an excellent Memoir and introductory notes to the different

speeches. Most of the speeches, we may add, were revised for the press by Mr. Canning himself.

George Canning was descended from a respectable Warwickshire family, who traced their lineage back to the time of Edward III., when one William Canning was Mayor of Bristol. Early in the seventeenth century the branch from which the statesman was descended received the grant of an estate in the north of Ireland, and removed to that country. There Canning's father was born; but at an early age he was compelled by family dissensions to leave his home, and to seek his fortune in London. In 1768, he married Miss Mary Ann Costello, an Irish lady of considerable personal beauty and of not a little intellectual culture. She was, however, inferior in social position to her husband; and the marriage gave great offence to his relatives. Mr. Canning was disinherited; and after a vain struggle with adverse fortune he died, in April, 1771, leaving one son, George Canning, who was born on the 11th of April, 1770. After Mr. Canning's death his widow went upon the stage, was twice married, and survived her third husband several years. By her first husband's family she appears to have been treated with much coldness and neglect. But her son never failed in affection toward her. When he went to college, he appropriated to her use a part of his own allowance; and when he retired from office in 1801, he caused the pension to which he was entitled to be settled on her. He survived her but a few months; and to the close of her life he made it a rule to write to her once a week, and to pay her an annual visit.

The care of his education was intrusted to his father's brother, a prosperous London merchant, and its expenses were defrayed from a small estate which was settled on him by his grandfather. At an early age he was sent to school at Hyde Abbey, Winchester, where he was thoroughly grounded in the rudiments of liberal culture; and subsequently he went to Eton. Here he soon distinguished himself as a scholar, and finally became captain of the school. While at Eton he was one of the principal contributors to the *Microcosm*, a college miscellany, which also counted among its contributors John Hookham Frere and Robert Smith (Bobus). Canning was

the largest contributor ; and several of his contributions have much merit.

At the age of eighteen he left Eton and was entered of Christ Church College, Oxford. Here he fully maintained the reputation which he brought with him from Eton, and soon rose to a very high rank as a scholar. Among his most intimate friends at the University were Robert Jenkinson, afterward Earl of Liverpool, Lord Holland, Sturges Bourne, Lord Granville, and Lord Boringdon, afterward Earl of Morley. With several of these he was subsequently brought into the closest official connection, and his friendly relations with all remained unbroken through the vicissitudes of political life. On leaving Oxford he went to London to read law, and was entered as a student at Lincoln's Inn. He does not seem, however, to have devoted himself very zealously to the study of the law. His mind was of too imaginative a cast, and he was too much devoted to literature and society to feel a deep interest in the abstruse questions of legal science. Political life was the goal of his ambition, and he was interested in his law-books only so far as they illustrated constitutional law.

At this time all his associations were with the Whigs. His uncle, Stratford Canning, was a Whig ; and he had been introduced, while still a boy, to Burke, Fox, General Fitzpatrick, and other prominent men in the party. At a little later period he became an intimate friend of Sheridan. His subsequent adhesion to Mr. Pitt has, therefore, sometimes been regarded as a dereliction of principle and a betrayal of his early friends. "That Mr. Canning passed over, at once, from the one party to the other, cannot be denied," says Mr. Bell, in his *Life of Canning* ; and this opinion has been generally entertained by other writers. But it is clear from a letter to Lord Boringdon, written in December, 1792, and now first printed by Mr. Stapleton, that, before his entrance into Parliament, Mr. Canning differed from his Whig friends upon several questions which were then considered as test questions of genuine Whiggism. At the end of this letter, in which he sets forth his own political views at considerable length, he observes that, if he were then in Parliament, he should support Mr. Pitt. This explicit declaration we regard as the more important,

since it not only shows the exact state of his political opinions, but also relieves his memory from much of the opprobrium which always attaches to a mere political adventurer.

From a consideration of Mr. Canning's later opinions and policy, it is, indeed, certain that the principles of his Whig friends made a deep impression on his mind ; but at this time his allegiance to them must have been very slight, and it required no sacrifice on his part to enter Parliament under the avowed patronage of Mr. Pitt. That great man had long seen the importance of strengthening himself in the House of Commons, and, with his accustomed sagacity, he perceived that there was no more effectual way of doing this than by securing the personal support of some young men of promise. Accordingly an intimation was conveyed to Mr. Canning, then in his twenty-fourth year, that a seat would be procured for him if he were disposed to support the ministerial measures. The proposition was accepted, and in the latter part of 1793 he was returned for the borough of Newport, in the Isle of Wight. In Parliament he found a splendid array of accomplished orators on the Opposition benches, and a few men of note in the ministerial ranks. Among the members of the House of Commons at that time were Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Erskine, Grey, and Windham ; and Burke also still lingered for a brief period in that august assembly. For more than the lifetime of a generation Canning retained a seat in the House of Commons, but never did he encounter there men of greater ability than was possessed by these masters of Parliamentary eloquence. In listening to them his own style was formed, and he acquired all that the best models could teach.

His first speech was not delivered until the 31st of January, 1794, when he spoke in favor of Mr. Pitt's proposed grant of a subsidy to the King of Sardinia. The debate had been conducted with much animation and ability, and had involved a general discussion of the ministerial policy. Every eye was turned toward the new adherent of the ministry, as he rose to justify the fame which had preceded him, or to disappoint the general expectation. He began his speech with some degree of embarrassment, trembling, he says in a letter to Lord Boringdon, lest he " should hesitate or misplace a word in the

first two or three sentences ; while all was dead silence around me, and my own voice sounded to my ears quite like some other gentleman's." Gradually, as he warmed in his argument, he acquired confidence ; but from a feeling of self-sufficiency he was soon roused, to quote his own words, " by accidentally casting my eyes towards the Opposition bench, for the purpose of paying compliments to Fox, and assuring him of my respect and admiration, and there seeing certain members of Opposition laughing (as I thought) and quizzing me." This untimely discovery entirely disconcerted him, and it was only after he was reassured by the cheers of his friends, that he was able to proceed with his speech " triumphantly to the end." The result was a complete success ; and from that moment his position in the House was secure. The speech, in truth, was marked by courage, tact, and a considerable knowledge of general politics ; but the speaker's views were far less liberal than might have been anticipated from his early associations, and the whole speech was more brilliant than solid.

During his first years of Parliamentary service, Mr. Canning took but little part in the discussions. On several occasions, however, he gave the ministry a hearty support ; and in his first session he spoke in the debate on the causes of the failure of the attack on Dunkirk, and in the debate on the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. In his speech on the latter occasion he gave a remarkable proof of Mr. Pitt's influence over him, by avowing his own change of opinion in regard to Parliamentary Reform, and his agreement with the minister in opposition to it, adding that, " if the Chancellor of the Exchequer should hereafter return to his former opinions, it was probable that he might again agree with him." A declaration at once so extravagant and so rash did not pass unnoticed by the Whigs, and, in his reply to Canning, Mr. Courtenay dwelt upon it with bitter sarcasm. We have already shown that Mr. Canning had not sacrificed his political principles, but Mr. Courtenay was fully justified in representing him as having avowed a sacrifice of his personal independence. As long as Mr. Pitt lived, Canning yielded an implicit assent to his opinions on almost every question of public policy discussed in Parliament, and after Mr. Pitt's death he was still guided by his principles.

As late as 1812, he said, in a speech to his constituents at Liverpool : —

“To one man, while he lived, I was devoted with all my heart and with all my soul. Since the death of Mr. Pitt, I acknowledge no leader. My political allegiance lies buried in his grave; but I have, though not his immediate counsels to follow, his memory to cherish and revere. So far as I know his opinions on subjects which were in his time, as well as now, of great public interest, I have adhered and shall adhere to those opinions as the guides of my public conduct. Where I can only reason from analogy on new questions which may arise, I shall endeavor to apply to those questions, whatever they may be, the principles which I imbibed and inherited from him.”

At the opening of the next session, Mr. Canning seconded the Address in Answer to the King's Speech, but he still abstained from frequent participation in the debates. The value of his support, however, was fully recognized by the government, and before the close of the session he was appointed Under-Secretary of State to Lord Grenville, at that time head of the Department of Foreign Affairs. By no one could such an honor be more highly appreciated than it was by Mr. Canning; for through life he entertained the opinion that no statesman could effectually serve his country unless in office, entirely ignoring the fact that, under a representative government, the leader of the Opposition often exerts an influence scarcely inferior to that wielded by the head of the administration. To the duties of his new place he devoted himself with zeal and assiduity, early laying the foundation of those business habits which were so useful to him in his subsequent career. The appointment excited the jealousy of some of his competitors in the Parliamentary race, and was attacked by the Opposition, who were eager for any opportunity to harass the ministry. In his reply to these attacks Mr. Canning exhibited so much ability, and was so successful in defending his own conduct, that his reputation passed unscathed through the discussion. With this exception, he spoke but little for several years; and Mr. Therry's collection does not contain a single speech between March, 1795, and December, 1798.

In the mean time, however, Canning was giving vigorous play to those remarkable powers of ridicule and sarcasm with which



his name was for many years chiefly associated. Neither in Parliament nor in the public press was the government supported by such an array of accomplished speakers and well-trained writers as were enlisted in opposition to it. In a division the ministry was united and powerful ; but in a debate it was singularly weak. Nor were the papers in the interest of the government equal in ability to those in the Opposition. In this state of things Canning suggested the publication of a weekly journal, devoted to refutation and ridicule of the Whig writers ; and he is said to have written the prospectus defining the objects of the publication : —

“It is our intention,” he says, speaking in the name of the editors, “to publish weekly, during the session of Parliament, a paper, containing, — First, an abstract of the important events of the week, both at home and abroad ; Secondly, such reflections as may naturally arise out of them ; and, Thirdly, a contradiction and confutation of the falsehoods and misrepresentations concerning these events, their causes, and their consequences, which may be found in the papers devoted to the cause of Sedition and Irreligion, to the pay or principles of France.”

The first number of the journal thus announced was issued on the 20th of November, 1797, in a quarto form of eight pages, without advertisements. Gifford, afterward editor of the *Quarterly Review*, was the editor ; Canning, George Ellis, John Hookham Frere, Jenkinson, afterward Earl of Liverpool, and Lord Mornington, afterward Marquis Wellesley, were the principal contributors, and even Mr. Pitt himself is believed to have contributed to some of the numbers. From the conflict of internal and external evidence it is difficult to determine the authorship of many of the pieces, and in some instances they were doubtless joint productions ; but it is known that Canning was a very large contributor, especially to the poetical department. He also wrote the Introduction in the first number, in which the editor laments his inability “to find one good and true poet of sound principles and sober practice, upon whom we could rely for furnishing us with a handsome quantity of sufficient and approved verse,” and in which occurs the celebrated description of the Jacobin poet, who “points the thunder of his blank verse at the head of the

recruiting sergeant, or roars in dithyrambics against the lieutenant of press-gangs." To this number Canning likewise contributed the well-known parody on Southey's inscription for the apartment where Harry Marten was imprisoned. Among his other poetical contributions are "The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder," the lines "To the Author of the Epistle to the Editors of the Anti-Jacobin," "The Progress of Man," and "New Morality," perhaps the most famous, as it is the most malignant, piece in the whole work. We are not, indeed, aware that he ever claimed the authorship of these pieces, but he did not hesitate to admit his connection with the Anti-Jacobin ; and once, when he was attacked in the House of Commons on this account, he unhesitatingly declared that he "felt no shame for its character or principles, nor any other sorrow for the share he had had in it, than that which the imperfection of his pieces was calculated to inspire."

In truth the wit of the Anti-Jacobin was singularly keen and effective ; and its blows were aimed with admirable skill. No other work of its kind, except the *Rolliad*, was ever characterized by so much brilliancy and power, and no one ever secured so enduring a reputation. Still, it was marked by a bitterness and malignity of tone, an unscrupulousness of statement, and a disregard of the common decencies of life, which nothing can justify. Fox and the Whigs were pursued with unbounded virulence ; all who differed from the writers were treated as little better than knaves or traitors ; and men who had few or no political sympathies in common were comprehended in one sweeping ban. Powerful as the Anti-Jacobin proved itself in attack, it was a scarcely less dangerous ally ; and at the end of eight or nine months it was discontinued, — at the instigation of Pitt, it is said. Its writers, however, had enriched the language with some of the most admirable parodies ever written ; and whatever we may think of the political principles which they advocated, or of the indecency of some of their productions, the merit of much of their poetry must be universally conceded. More than any one else, Canning contributed to build up this posthumous fame for a series of fugitive poems designed by their writers for no higher purpose than to subserve a mere partisan end.

Upon the discontinuance of the Anti-Jacobin, Canning again became a frequent speaker in the House of Commons; and when Mr. Tierney brought forward his motion respecting peace with France, in December, 1798, he opposed it in a long and very able speech on the history of the war and the actual condition of the country. A few weeks later, when Dundas brought down the King's Message relative to a Union with Ireland, he again addressed the House; and both by speech and vote he contributed to the success of that great measure in the English Parliament. No man, indeed, was more active in support of the Union than Canning. After it was carried he was one of those who followed Mr. Pitt into retirement, on the alleged ground of their inability to obtain the King's consent to bring forward Catholic Emancipation. Canning remained out of office until the formation of Mr. Pitt's second administration, in the early part of 1804.

The last speech which he delivered previously to Mr. Pitt's resignation was in February, 1800, when he spoke at length on the King's Message relative to Bonaparte's overtures for peace, and strongly defended the war. In the following July he married Miss Joan Scott, daughter of General Scott and sister-in-law of the Marquis of Tichfield, afterward Duke of Portland. By this marriage Canning acquired a fortune of one hundred thousand pounds sterling, and added much to his political weight and influence. His Parliamentary position, however, soon began to give him some degree of uneasiness. Pitt's relation to Addington and the new ministry was peculiar, and embarrassing to his friends and supporters. They could not, consistently with their own views of public policy, give to Addington the countenance of their speeches and votes. Still less could they join the Opposition while Pitt continued to hold his anomalous position in reference to the ministry. In this dilemma Canning and the other Pittites not unfrequently spoke against the ministers, and refuted the ministerial arguments, while they voted for the ministerial measures. But such a condition of things could not last; and though Canning hesitated to join the Opposition, his attacks soon became more frequent and more bitter.

Certainly a weaker administration than that of Addington,  
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or the Doctor, as he was familiarly called, had not existed in England for many years; and there had never been one for which more contempt was expressed, both in Parliament and in the private correspondence of the great party leaders. As early as February, 1801, before the ministerial arrangements were completed, Fox wrote to the Earl of Lauderdale: "Do you think they could have picked out any one fellow in the House of Commons so sure to make a foolish figure in this new situation as Addington? I think not." A year later he expressed himself still more strongly. "The truth is, I suppose," he wrote, "that Addington is a fool, and that there is no reasoning upon the actions of such, especially when they have got about them, as he seems to have done, a parcel of people as foolish as himself." This unfavorable opinion was confirmed by a longer observation, and in March, 1804, a few months before the fall of the ministry, Fox wrote to Lord Lauderdale: "The Doctor is more and more contemned every day; indeed, the contempt, both with respect to the degree and universality of it, is beyond what was ever known. Not one unpaid defender, unless you reckon Dallas, who is impatient for the Solicitor-Generalship." A fortnight later he wrote to the same correspondent: "The Doctor has exceeded, if possible, all his former lies in what he said about the Russian business. It is, I own, an ignoble chase, but I should have great pleasure in hunting down this vile fellow." Lord Grenville entertained an equally unfavorable opinion of the minister; and in a letter to his brother, the Marquis of Buckingham, under date of January 5th, 1804, he says: "Tom asked me, and seemed to expect that I should learn from my visitor, what the Doctor's mysterious declaration in answer to Fox's question could possibly mean. It meant, as usual with the Doctor's mysteries, nothing at all, and the whole assertion was, as is no less usual with the Doctor's assertions, a lie." At the outset, Pitt probably regarded him only as a useful tool to fill the office of prime minister, while he himself secretly directed the measures of the government. This opinion Pitt had occasion afterward to change; but it did not give place to a more favorable judgment. Sheridan constantly ridiculed the unfortunate premier in Parliament; and in one of his speeches he parodied Martial with great effect: —

“ I do not like thee, Doctor Fell,  
The reason why I cannot tell ;  
But this I ’m sure, I know full well,  
I do not like thee, Doctor Fell.”

On another occasion, when the Scotch members had deserted the minister, he threw the House into a storm of laughter by exclaiming, “ Doctor, the Thanes fly from thee ! ” Indeed, the political literature of the period abounds with illustrations of the contempt with which Addington was regarded by all parties, and of the ridicule heaped upon him.

Canning fully shared these feelings, and his dislike of the minister is said to have found expression in verse as well as in his Parliamentary speeches. Among the pieces ascribed to him are “ The Grand Consultation,” “ Moderate Men and Moderate Measures,” and an “ Ode to the Doctor,” beginning,

“ How blest, how firm the statesman stands,  
(Him no low intrigue e’er shall move,)  
Circled by faithful *kindred* bands,  
And propped by fond *fraternal* love.

“ When his speeches hobble vilely,  
What ‘ *Hear him* ’ burst from Brother Hiley ;  
When the faltering periods lag,  
Hark to the cheers of Brother Bragge.”\*

About the same time he wrote the famous song, “ The Pilot that weathered the Storm,” of which the chief purpose was undoubtedly to prepare the way for Pitt’s return to power. In Parliament he rarely spoke of the ministers in respectful terms, and often drew invidious comparisons between them and his great leader. Thus in a speech on the Army Estimates, on the 8th of December, 1802, while supporting the ministers by his vote, he took occasion to avow his utter want of confidence in them.

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\* “ Brother Hiley ” and “ Brother Bragge ” were Mr. Hiley Addington, the prime minister’s brother, and Mr. Bragge Bathurst, his brother-in-law. Both were zealous supporters of the ministry, and both held lucrative appointments under the government. The *sobriquet* of the Doctor was first applied to Addington by Canning. It was probably suggested partly by the fact that Addington’s father was a physician, and partly by Addington’s own recommendation of a hop pillow on the occasion of one of the king’s attacks of insanity.

"I have no disguise nor reservation," he said; "I do think that this is a time when the administration of the government ought to be in the ablest and fittest hands; I do not think the hands in which it is now placed answer to that description; I do not pretend to conceal in what quarter I think that fitness most eminently resides; I do not subscribe to the doctrines which have been advanced, that, in times like the present, the fitness of individuals for their political situation is no part of the consideration to which a member of Parliament may fairly turn his attention. I know not a more solemn or important duty that a member of Parliament can have to discharge, than by giving, at fit seasons, a free opinion upon the character and qualities of public men. Away with the cant of 'Measures, not men'! the idle supposition that it is the harness, and not the horses, that draw the chariot along! No, sir, if the comparison must be made, if the distinction must be taken, men are everything, measures comparatively nothing. I speak, sir, of times of difficulty and danger, — of times when systems are shaken, when precedents and general rules of conduct fail. Then it is, that not to this or that measure, however prudently devised, however blameless in execution, but to the energy and character of individuals, a state must be indebted for its salvation. Then it is that kingdoms rise or fall in proportion as they are upheld, not by well-meant endeavors, laudable though they may be, but by commanding, overawing talents, — by able men."

This general contempt and distrust found expression in a series of resolutions moved by Colonel Patten on the 3d of June, 1803, condemnatory of the foreign policy of the ministry, and concluding with the declaration, "That, by all these instances of misconduct in the present ministers of his Majesty's government, they have proved themselves unworthy of the confidence reposed in them, in such an important crisis as the present." In the course of the discussion which followed, Mr. Pitt spoke briefly, declaring that he was not prepared to vote either for or against the propositions, and concluding with a motion "that the other orders of the day be now read." The effect of this motion, if carried, would be to evade a decisive vote on the motion of a want of confidence, but it was acceptable neither to the ministers nor to their opponents. On the part of the former, Lord Hawkesbury, at that time Secretary for Foreign Affairs, declared that "ministers could not acquiesce in the discredit of a suspended censure." On the other

hand, Canning, after expressing "his pain and reluctance, which nothing less than a conscientious sense of duty could enable him to subdue, at finding himself compelled to differ, for the first time in his life, from his right honorable friend," boldly attacked the ministry. "Subscribing, therefore," he said in conclusion, "to the truth of every allegation contained in the resolutions to which he had referred, he could have no hesitation in giving a hearty assent to the resolution which asserts that by these instances of misconduct the ministers had proved themselves unworthy of the confidence of Parliament, and incapable of administering the public affairs to advantage at a crisis of such difficulty and danger." In order to give even greater point to his vote, he added, "with all the solemnity which he felt to belong to such a declaration, that he did not think the country safe while the administration of its affairs was suffered to continue in such hands." The question being then put on Mr. Pitt's motion, only fifty-six members voted in favor of it and three hundred and thirty-three against it. Mr. Pitt and some of his friends immediately left the House, and the question then reverted to Mr. Patten's resolutions, the first of which was negatived. When the question was put on the second resolution, Mr. Fox rose and said, that "he should not vote for the resolution, though it was impossible for him to approve of the conduct of ministers, because he did not know but that the successors of the present ministry might be more objectionable to him than they were." He accordingly withdrew, with several of his supporters, without dividing. On a division, the resolution was lost by a vote of two hundred and seventy-five against thirty-four,—Mr. Canning being one of the tellers for the minority. Two of the remaining resolutions were likewise negatived, and the fifth was withdrawn.

The ministry had triumphed; but their victory had shown that they were able to hold office only through the divisions and jealousies of their opponents. Of this source of strength they were soon deprived. Early in the following year a junction was formed between Fox and the Grenvilles, who now united in a systematic opposition to the ministry. The new Opposition speedily commenced a series of attacks on the gov-

ernment, in several of which they were aided by Pitt; and so successful were they, that, at the close of April, Addington, finding his majorities rapidly diminishing, determined to resign. Pitt was intrusted with the duty of forming an administration, and at once proposed a ministry on a broad basis, so as to include Fox and the Grenvilles. To this plan George III. objected, peremptorily refusing to admit Fox to a seat in the Cabinet. The consequence was, that the friends of Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville refused to join the proposed administration. Their refusal embarrassed Mr. Pitt; but he finally succeeded in forming a Cabinet of twelve members, including six of the late ministers. The principal members of the new government were Mr. Pitt, First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Eldon, Chancellor; the Duke of Portland, President of the Council; Lord Hawkesbury, Secretary for the Home Department; Lord Harrowby, Secretary for Foreign Affairs; Lord Melville, First Lord of the Admiralty; and Lord Castlereagh, President of the Board of Control. Canning had declined a place in the Cabinet, and was accordingly made Treasurer of the Navy.

In this capacity he took a leading part in the defence of his predecessor, Lord Melville, when articles of impeachment were brought against that wily Scot for embezzlement and official corruption, and at the same time justified some of his own acts which had been called in question. But he was less successful in defending Melville than in vindicating himself. "You don't meet with a single person in any company whatever," says Horner in a letter to Sir James Mackintosh, "who pretends to deny, or will suffer you to doubt, that Lord Melville has participated in the peculations of his subordinate. The cry is loud against placemen and Scotsmen." Under these circumstances, even Canning's ingenious and weighty arguments were not likely to produce much effect. Whitbread's resolutions, condemning the conduct of Lord Melville, were carried by the casting vote of the Speaker; and a few days afterward the unfortunate peer resigned his seat at the Admiralty Board, and his name was erased from the list of the Privy Council. The final result was the acquittal of Lord Melville; but the proceedings against him seriously weakened



the ministry. "We can get over Austerlitz," said Pitt, in reference to this subject not long before his death, "but we can never get over the Tenth Report." Every one saw the feebleness of the administration ; yet no attempt was made to strengthen it, and on the death of Mr. Pitt, in January, 1806, it ceased to exist.

After some fruitless negotiations, with a view to the reconstruction of the Cabinet, the king authorized Lord Grenville to form a new ministry on a broad basis. His Lordship at once undertook the task, and with little difficulty constructed an administration which included most of the prominent statesmen, and which is commonly spoken of under the name of "All the Talents." Lord Grenville was First Lord of the Treasury ; Lord Henry Petty, now Marquis of Lansdowne, Chancellor of the Exchequer ; Fox, Secretary for Foreign Affairs ; Earl Spencer, Secretary for the Home Department ; Windham, Secretary for War and the Colonies ; Grey, then known as Lord Howick, First Lord of the Admiralty ; Erskine, Chancellor ; and even Addington, who had recently been created Lord Sidmouth, was admitted into the Cabinet as Privy Seal. The ministry was certainly very strong in ability ; but it contained numerous elements of discord, and offered to the late ministers at least one vulnerable point of attack. In perfecting their arrangements the new Coalition had given to Lord Ellenborough, at that time Chief Justice of the King's Bench, a seat in the Cabinet without office. To such an arrangement there were obvious objections, since his Lordship might be required to try prosecutions as a judge which he had previously recommended as a minister. This incongruity does not seem, however, to have attracted the notice of the ministers ; but it did not escape the watchful eyes of the Opposition. As soon as the appointments were announced, notices of motions in reference to the subject were given in both Houses of Parliament, and much indignation and alarm were expressed out of Parliament. In the discussions which followed, Mr. Canning, whose weight in the House of Commons had been much increased by the death of Mr. Pitt, made a very effective argument against the appointment. Nevertheless, the proposed censure was negatived in the Commons by a large majority,

and in the Lords without a division, though, as Lord Campbell well observes in his *Lives of the Chief Justices*, “the argument was all on the losing side.” Canning also very strongly opposed Mr. Windham’s celebrated Limited Service Bill and the annual Mutiny Bill ; and it has been justly remarked, that he was even more violent in opposition to “All the Talents,” than he had been in his attacks on the Addington ministry. His speeches were frequent, and he carried into the debates the same spirit of unrelenting bitterness which he had previously exhibited in the *Anti-Jacobin*.

The attacks on the appointment of Lord Ellenborough doubtless weakened the ministry ; but it soon afterward received a severer blow in the death of Mr. Fox, which occurred on the 13th of September, 1806,—a little more than seven months after the new ministers had taken office. In the reconstruction of the Cabinet, rendered necessary by this event, Lord Howick was transferred to the Foreign Department ; Lord Holland was made Privy Seal, in place of Lord Sidmouth, who became President of the Council ; Mr. Thomas Grenville was appointed to the Admiralty ; and Mr. Tierney was made President of the Board of Control. The new arrangements, however, were of short duration. The Catholic Question and the intrigues of the Tories soon proved fatal to the government. Trusting too much in their own strength, and desirous of removing one blot at least from the statute-book, the ministers determined, with the consent of the king, to introduce a bill enabling his Majesty to grant military commissions to members of the Romish Church. Subsequently the king withdrew his consent to the measure, and the ministers accordingly yielded the point. But the bigoted mind of George III. was not satisfied with this concession. With characteristic obstinacy, he demanded of his responsible advisers, in addition to the withdrawal of the obnoxious bill, a written declaration that they would never bring the subject forward again, and that they would not propose any further measure for the relief of the Catholics. To this extraordinary demand they refused to accede, and, with a just sense of their own duty, they tendered their resignations, which were promptly accepted.

On the fall of the Grenville ministry the Tories immediately returned to power. In the new administration the Duke of Portland was First Lord of the Treasury; Spencer Perceval was Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the lead of the House of Commons; Lord Hawkesbury was Home Secretary; Lord Castlereagh, Secretary of War; and Lord Westmoreland, Privy Seal. Mr. Canning was made Foreign Secretary. His acceptance of office at this time, and in an administration thus constituted, subjected him to much obloquy, as it was generally thought that he had sacrificed his interest in the Catholic claims to the love of office. Sydney Smith in particular made him a special mark for the most merciless ridicule and satire in the Letters of Peter Plymley, attacking him; said the great wit, "not for the love of glory, but from the love of utility, as a burgomaster hunts a rat in a Dutch dyke, for fear it should flood a province." It does not, however, appear that Canning did in reality sacrifice the Catholic cause to personal ambition, or that he could have promoted the successful issue of the Catholic Question by declining to take office.\*

Mr. Canning remained at the head of the Foreign Department for a little more than two years. During this period he was very actively engaged in negotiations for a more effectual prosecution of the war, and also with the American minister in reference to the affair of the Chesapeake, and other matters in dispute with this country. His diplomatic papers were written with very great ability, though they were sometimes disfigured by sarcastic expressions, unbecoming in the discussion of great questions of international policy, and little suited

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\* The ministerial changes formed the subject of a debate in the House of Commons, on a motion "that it was contrary to the first duties of the responsible ministers of the crown to give a pledge that they would not offer advice to his Majesty on any subject of national concern." But after a very animated discussion the motion was defeated by a vote of two hundred and twenty-six in favor to two hundred and fifty-eight against it. According to Sir Samuel Romilly, who gives an interesting account of the debate and division, "Canning, after the most fulsome adulation of the king, said that he had made up his mind, when the Catholic Bill was first mentioned, to vote for it if the king was for it, and against it if the king was against it." This was certainly an unfortunate declaration, and, if it were to be interpreted literally, it would imply a remarkable indifference to the subject, or a great want of moral principle; but we now know that Canning meant only that he would not endanger the king's mental health for the sake of the Catholic cause.

to conciliate. In Parliament he continued to be a frequent speaker, and, though he did not hold the position of leader, he was one of the chief exponents of the ministerial policy. The two most important occasions on which he spoke were in the debates on the expedition against Copenhagen, and the inquiry into the conduct of the Duke of York, and on both occasions he spoke at length and with uncommon ability. He also took part in the discussions on the Roman Catholic petition in May, 1808, on the affairs of Spain, on the state of the empire, and other questions of temporary importance. In the debates on the Copenhagen expedition, he took very high ground, stoutly contending that the necessity of the case fully justified the course adopted by the ministry, but utterly refusing to name the source whence they had obtained their information. It must, however, be admitted by every impartial student of history, that no argument can justify so gross a violation of the rights of a neutral nation, that it left an indelible stain on the British name, and that Mr. Canning's connection with it forms one of the least justifiable acts in his public life.

Toward the close of 1809 an event occurred which led to Mr. Canning's resignation, and also produced other important changes in the Cabinet. He had for some time entertained the opinion that a change in the War Department would be advantageous to the public interests; and this opinion was communicated to the premier early in the spring. At the same time Mr. Canning tendered his own resignation as the alternative if the proposed change should not be effected. After some delay, the propriety of a change was acquiesced in by the head of the government, and from time to time various arrangements were proposed for carrying it into effect, either by the appointment of Lord Wellesley as successor to Lord Castlereagh, or by the transfer of the political correspondence of the War Department to the Foreign Office. But no intimation that any change in the business of his office had been contemplated was conveyed to Lord Castlereagh for several months, though it was well known to the other members of the government, and Mr. Canning had frequently expressed a desire that he should be informed of it. As the natural result of this concealment, his Lordship was greatly exasper-

ated when he first learned what had transpired. He at once addressed a note to Mr. Canning in reference to the subject. "I have no right, as a public man," he said, "to resent your demanding, upon public grounds, my removal from the particular office I have held, or even from the administration, as a condition of your continuing a member of the government; but I have a distinct right to expect that a proposition justifiable in itself shall not be executed in an unjustifiable manner, and at the expense of my honor and reputation." In reply to this demand Canning contented himself with denying the correctness of his Lordship's inference, without offering any explanation; and a hostile meeting was accordingly arranged. It took place on Putney Heath on the 21st of September; and on the second fire, Canning received a slight wound in the thigh. But within three weeks he was sufficiently recovered to attend the king's levee and resign his office. He was followed into retirement by his personal friends, Huskisson and Sturges Bourne. Lord Castlereagh also resigned about the same time; and before the close of the year the death of the Duke of Portland put an end to the administration.

From a careful consideration of the published documents relative to this famous duel, it is clear that neither party can escape grave censure. It is true that the practice of settling private disputes by an appeal to arms was not as severely condemned by public sentiment then as it now is. Yet it was generally considered that Lord Castlereagh's conduct was rash and inconsiderate, and that, so far as Mr. Canning was concerned, there was no sufficient ground for the duel. Lord Castlereagh had indeed been shamefully treated, but for this treatment Mr. Canning was not responsible. He had constantly urged on the premier the importance of a frank and manly dealing with his colleague, and had himself adopted that course through the early stages of the transaction. But, as Sir Samuel Romilly well remarks, "if Lord Castlereagh's sending the challenge was reprehensible, the manner in which it was accepted by Mr. Canning was, if possible, still more deserving of censure." The proper line of conduct for him to pursue was perfectly obvious. Lord Castlereagh's challenge was founded on a mistake, which it was easy to correct with-

out any sacrifice of personal honor, or any breach of public or private confidence. Mr. Canning did not adopt this straightforward course. On the contrary, he wrote to Lord Castlereagh that his Lordship had totally misconceived his conduct, but that he would not set him right; and he eagerly accepted the challenge. Nothing could have been more irritating, or more repugnant to every sentiment of justice, than such a reply; and there is scarcely a recorded instance in the annals of private warfare which does not admit of palliation more readily than does this duel between Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning.

The death of the Duke of Portland and the resignation of the rival ministers rendered other changes necessary in the construction of the government. Spencer Perceval succeeded to the premiership by the king's command, and at once sought to strengthen the ministry by enlarging its basis. Overtures were accordingly made to Lords Grey and Grenville with a view of procuring their co-operation; but both of those eminent men refused to coalesce with statesmen whose principles and policy they condemned, and by whom they felt that they had been ill used in 1807. In consequence of their refusal to take office, nothing remained but to fill up the ministry from the friends of Lord Sidmouth, or to bring forward a sufficient number of new men to enable the government to go on with as few changes as possible. The latter alternative was adopted. Mr. Perceval retained the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and also became First Lord of the Treasury. Canning's place was filled, to the surprise of every one, by his friend, Lord Wellesley. Lord Hawkesbury was transferred to the War Department, and was succeeded in the Home Department by Mr. Richard Ryder. To the new ministry Canning gave a qualified support, though he did not take a very active part in the discussions in Parliament.\*

His first speech of much importance after his retirement from office was delivered in March, 1810, in the adjourned debate on Lord Porchester's resolutions condemnatory of the

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\* In the establishment of the Quarterly Review he took a warm interest. He contributed to it a review of Gifford's *Life of Pitt*; and he also wrote a part or the whole of some other papers. As might have been anticipated, his articles had all the brilliancy of his speeches, and they were among the most noticeable papers of their kind.

expedition to the Scheldt. In this speech he ably and zealously defended the propriety of this disastrous expedition, contending, "that, in advising that measure, his Majesty's ministers were actuated by a just sense of their public duty; that they proceeded upon motives and principles, such as, if I were not myself a party concerned in the transaction, I should not scruple to assert entitled them to the approbation of their country; and such as they may confidently recommend to whoever may be hereafter their successors in office." The result was the defeat of Lord Porchester's resolutions, and the adoption of a counter resolution approving the conduct of the ministers. In the following June he again came forward to the support of the government in a long and masterly speech on the third reading of the Vote of Credit Bill, in the course of which he ably discussed the condition of Europe, and of Spain in particular, strenuously urging the most energetic prosecution of the war in the Peninsula.

In the latter part of the same year the king had another and severer attack of the malady by which so much of his life was clouded, and the question of the Regency once more became the subject of animated discussions. In these debates Mr. Canning took a conspicuous part, and on the last day of the year he delivered a very long and elaborate speech on the Regency Resolutions moved by Mr. Perceval. Canning's position in regard to this subject was one of considerable difficulty and embarrassment. As a disciple of Mr. Pitt, he could not consistently deny the right of Parliament to impose such restrictions on the Regent as they might deem proper. But having determined, in view of the existing condition of the country, and perhaps with an eye to his own political prospects, to oppose restrictions in the present instance, he was compelled to ground his opposition to them entirely on reasons of expediency. At the same time he was obliged to acknowledge the validity of the precedent established under Mr. Pitt's administration, and to prove his own consistency. His opposition, however, was fruitless, and the proposed restrictions were enacted for a period of one year. At the end of that time it was evident that no amendment in the king's condition was to be expected, and the restrictions were not renewed.

The next important subject which engaged Mr. Canning's attention in Parliament was the Report of the Bullion Committee, submitted by Mr. Horner in 1811. The principal speech which Mr. Canning delivered in these discussions is commonly regarded as one of his ablest productions, and as embodying nearly everything since urged on the side of the question advocated by him. Nothing, indeed, can be more luminous than his statement of the principles of the Bullionists, or more persuasive than his manner of recommending them. It is a curious circumstance, however, that while he supported the first fifteen resolutions moved by Mr. Horner, which contained a statement of the laws relative to the value of gold and silver coin, the convertibility of the notes of the Bank of England, and the actual condition of the currency, he opposed the sixteenth resolution, which was a logical deduction from the preceding statement, and provided for an early resumption of cash payments by the Bank. All the resolutions, however, were rejected, and a few days later Mr. Vansittart brought forward a series of seventeen counter resolutions. These were opposed by Mr. Canning in another powerful speech; but they were passed by a considerable majority.

Early in the following year the administration of Mr. Perceval was brought to an end by the assassination of the premier in the lobby of the House of Commons; and overtures were at once made to Mr. Canning and Lord Wellesley, who had resigned some time previously, to join the ministry. This invitation was refused by both, from an unwillingness to form part of an administration constructed on the basis of resistance to the Catholic claims. Upon the failure of these negotiations various unsuccessful attempts were made to form an administration on a broader basis, and several communications passed between Lords Wellesley and Moira, who were successively empowered to conduct the negotiations, and Lords Grey and Grenville. It is now known that the failure of the negotiations with the Whig Lords was owing to the treachery of Sheridan, whose conduct even his biographer, Thomas Moore, says, "admits of no vindication." Throughout these transactions Canning's course was upright and consistent. Though anxious, as he said in a speech thirteen years later, to take office



at a time when he could "reap the fruits of the harvest which he had sown under the lowering atmosphere of distrust and discouragement, and the early and ungenial growth of which he had watched with such intense anxiety," he declined to sacrifice the interests of the Catholic cause even to this desired object. Rather than join an administration formed on the basis of united and systematic opposition to Catholic Emancipation, he relinquished for an indefinite period all hope of resuming an official position,—a position much more valuable in his eyes than in those of most men. Nor was this all. "To represent the University in which I was educated," he once said, "formed the first visions of my youthful ambition. Before that object all others vanished into comparative insignificance. It was desirable to me, beyond all the blandishments of power, beyond all the rewards and favors of the crown." This coveted honor also he sacrificed to his convictions of duty.

Every attempt to enlarge the basis of the ministry having thus failed, the old expedient of filling up the vacancies with men of inferior ability was again attempted. Lord Liverpool was made First Lord of the Treasury; Mr. Vansittart was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Sidmouth tried a new office as Secretary for the Home Department; Lord Bathurst became Secretary of War and the Colonies; and Lord Castlereagh, as Foreign Secretary, had the lead of the House of Commons. At the general election in the following October, Mr. Canning was invited to become one of the candidates for the representation of Liverpool, and after an animated contest was chosen over Mr. Brougham by a large majority. Among his principal speeches in the first session of the new Parliament were those on the war with the United States, on the Catholic claims, and on the vote of thanks to the Marquis of Wellington. With the exception of a few remarks on some topics connected with the war, these were the last speeches which he delivered in Parliament for nearly four years; and during a considerable part of the time he was out of the country.\*

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\* In the summer of 1813, Mr. Canning took the unusual step of formally dis-

In the summer of 1814 he was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to the court of Lisbon to receive the Portuguese royal family on their anticipated return from Brazil. The acceptance of this mission subjected Mr. Canning to much undeserved obloquy, and it was doubtless, as he afterward declared, a political blunder; but there can be no doubt that his motives were pure. He remained abroad nearly two years, having resigned his appointment some months before his return. Early in June, 1816, he joined the ministry as President of the Board of Control, and in the same month he was re-elected as one of the members for Liverpool. His assumption of office was the signal for a renewal of the attacks on his appointment as Ambassador to Lisbon, and in the early part of 1817 the whole subject underwent a Parliamentary discussion. On the 6th of May in that year, Mr. Lambton, afterward Lord Durham, brought forward a series of resolutions condemning the appointment as uncalled for, and as "attended with an unnecessary and unjustifiable waste of the public money." These resolutions he supported in an elaborate speech, asserting that "the mission to Lisbon was undertaken with no prospect of advantage to the interests of this country in its political or commercial relations, but with a view solely to the political, and, he might almost say, commercial advantage of the ministers themselves," and that "the plain and almost avowed purpose of the mission was to procure a place for the right honorable gentleman." In reply to this attack Mr. Canning delivered a masterly speech, which satisfactorily refuted all the charges brought against his personal integrity, though it was still evident that he had been very indiscreet in accepting the appointment.

During the next three years he was a frequent speaker in the House of Commons, though Lord Castlereagh continued to

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banding his party, but for what purpose it is very difficult to determine. "A singular political event," says Mr. Horner in a letter to Lord Grenville, dated July 22, 1813, "and one not very intelligible, was announced last night; that Canning has formally, and with some solemnity, disbanded his party; telling the gentlemen who have been his supporters during the session, that they may for the future consider themselves as unengaged; and that he is no longer to be regarded as their head. Ward says they are all turned adrift upon the wide world."

be the ministerial leader. In July, 1817, he opposed at considerable length Brougham's motion for an address relative to the state of the nation ; and in the following year his most important speech was in support of the Indemnity Bill, brought forward for the protection of those persons " who, since the 26th of January, 1817, had acted in apprehending, imprisoning, or detaining in custody persons suspected of high treason or treasonable practices, and in the suppression of tumultuous and unlawful assemblies." This speech is chiefly remarkable as containing the celebrated allusion to " the revered and ruptured Ogden," — an expression in reference to which there was much controversy at the time, and which afforded a favorite ground of attack on Mr. Canning. In the session of 1819 he brought forward a motion for a vote of thanks to Lord Hastings and the Indian army, which he supported in an ingenious and carefully considered speech, well suited to disarm opposition ; and he also strenuously opposed Tierney's motion for an inquiry into the state of the nation, and spoke in reply to Sir James Mackintosh on the bill to prevent enlistments in England for military service under foreign pay, and in favor of the bill relative to Stamp Duties on newspapers and small pamphlets. Indeed, through the whole of this period he was one of the most active and influential champions of the ministerial policy ; and he associated his own name with all the oppressive measures which rendered the Liverpool ministry hateful in the eyes of the people. But, fortunately, about this time a series of events occurred which separated him from his colleagues, and gave him opportunity to review and modify his opinions in regard to many of the leading questions of the day.

On the 29th of January, 1820, George III. died, and was succeeded by the Prince Regent. Considered merely in its political aspects, this was not an event of much significance, since no one anticipated any change of men or measures in consequence of the demise of the king. No surprise, therefore, was felt at the reappointment of the ministers. But the death of the king opened anew some painful questions, which very seriously affected Mr. Canning's position and prospects, and for a time endangered the whole social fabric. The early

life of the Prince of Wales, now become George IV., had been stained by the grossest vices, and at the age of twenty-three he had married Mrs. Fitzherbert, a young widow of considerable personal attractions, and a member of the Romish Church. This marriage was invalid by the laws of England, and a few months after it was contracted its existence was denied in the House of Commons by Mr. Fox, on the authority of the Prince himself. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to establish the fact of the marriage ; and it is believed that this previous marriage was one of the causes of the Prince's disinclination to contract a lawful alliance. Finally, however, he announced his determination to marry, and his selection of his cousin, the Princess Caroline of Brunswick. The new marriage was solemnized on the 8th of April, 1795 ; and it is matter of historical record, that the Prince, who had already taken a violent aversion to his bride, was in such a state of beastly intoxication that he could scarcely stand during the ceremony. The only fruit of this marriage was the Princess Charlotte, whose untimely death, in 1817, gave occasion for the delivery of one of the most splendid of Robert Hall's discourses.

Almost from the day of the marriage a virtual separation between the Prince and Princess had existed ; and, in April, 1796, three months after the birth of the young princess, the rupture became open and avowed. From that time the Princess was closely watched by the minions of her husband ; and occasionally aspersions were cast upon her character. At length these vague charges took form, and in May, 1806, a commission was appointed to examine into the truth of " certain written declarations touching the conduct of H. R. H. the Princess of Wales." The result of the inquiry was her entire acquittal from the principal charge. She still continued, however, to be the object of persecution ; and in 1814, by the advice of Mr. Canning, who had always maintained friendly relations with her, she determined to leave England for the Continent. There she was living when she heard of the king's death, and the consequent accession of her husband. Upon receiving this intelligence, she decided to return and claim her rights as Queen of England. Her decision was at once made known to her friends.

In this condition of affairs his Majesty was extremely anxious to procure a divorce ; and immediately after his accession he addressed a paper to the members of the Cabinet asking their advice in regard to the subject. In reply to the inquiry a Cabinet Minute was drawn up and presented to the king on the 10th of February, in which it was ably maintained that any attempt to procure a divorce would be inexpedient and probably unsuccessful ; and with much adroitness it was suggested that the Princess of Wales would undoubtedly “ offer to state, not only matter of recrimination, but every circumstance which she might be disposed or advised to represent as neglect or ill-usage, even from the time of her coming to this country.” At the same time the ministers recommended the passage of a bill by Parliament granting to the Princess “ an annuity, payable only during her continued residence abroad ” ; and they further expressed the opinion, that the king “ would be fully justified in withholding from the Princess those distinctions which it is in your Majesty’s option to confer upon her, in directing that she should not be named in the Liturgy, and in refusing to her the honor of coronation.” This Minute appears to have expressed the unanimous opinion of the Cabinet ; but it may be worth observing, that Mr. Canning indorsed on the copy retained by him a memorandum to the effect, that, while he entirely concurred in it as a whole, he could not have agreed to the omission of the Princess’s name in the Liturgy, “ if any *penal* process, of any kind whatever, had been in contemplation.”

The advice in this document was by no means agreeable to his Majesty, and two days afterward he sent a spirited reply, probably drawn up by one of the members of his household, in which an attempt is made to refute the arguments of the ministers, and the proposed course of proceeding is altogether disapproved. This reply elicited from the ministers another elaborate and carefully drawn Cabinet Minute, repeating with increased clearness and precision their former arguments, and concluding with the declarations : “ If your Majesty and the Princess were in the situation of private individuals, it may be assumed that a divorce could not possibly be obtained ” ; and “ The proposition of a bill of divorce would, under all the

circumstances, produce public evils and inconveniences far overbalancing any public advantage which could be expected to be derived from that measure." After considering the new document for three days, his Majesty informed the Cabinet that the proposed plan was satisfactory to him, and that he was "ready, for the sake of public decorum and the public interest, to make this great and painful sacrifice of his personal feelings."

This decision was soon rendered nugatory by the determination of the Princess to return to England, and claim the position to which she deemed herself entitled. Her intention to adopt this course was known to her friends, as we have remarked, almost immediately after the king's death; but it was not until June that she arrived in London. No preparations had been made by the ministry to receive her, or to provide a residence for her. She accordingly took up her abode with Alderman Wood in the City. In the mean time the ministry determined to proceed against her in Parliament by a Bill of Pains and Penalties. In the justice and expediency of this measure Mr. Canning did not acquiesce; and he at once tendered his resignation. It was not accepted, but his Majesty authorized him, in case it should become necessary to assign any reason for remaining in the Cabinet, to state that he did so by the express command of the king. So great, however, was Mr. Canning's unwillingness to take part in the advocacy of a measure which he wholly condemned, that in August he went to Paris, and he remained abroad during the continuance of the proceedings. His private letters from the Continent, now printed by Mr. Stapleton for the first time, are full of interest, and show how closely he watched the course of affairs, and how anxious he was that his colleagues should get creditably out of the embarrassments in which they were involved.

When the bill was withdrawn by Lord Liverpool in consequence of the strenuous opposition which it had encountered, Mr. Canning returned to England. But the country had not yet subsided into its accustomed quiet; the subject was everywhere violently agitated; and it was anticipated that with the new session of Parliament the stormy discussions of this much-

vexed question would be at once resumed. Under these circumstances Mr. Canning felt that he could neither remain silent, nor absent himself from his place, without greatly embarrassing his colleagues; and on the 12th of December he again wrote to the king tendering his resignation. The next day the resignation was accepted, and Mr. Canning ceased to hold office on the appointment of his successor, Mr. Bragge Bathurst, Lord Sidmouth's brother-in-law.

Throughout these transactions Mr. Canning's course stands in honorable contrast with that of Lord Eldon and several of his colleagues, who had also been friends of the Princess in previous years. He probably thought that her conduct, if not actually culpable, was indiscreet, and unfitted her for the high station which she claimed; but he did not forget that he had formerly been her friend and adviser. His path was therefore beset with difficulties. On the one hand, he could not support the measures into which the ministry had been unfortunately led. On the other hand, he could not resign, go into Opposition, and espouse the cause of the Princess, without sacrificing many of his most cherished convictions. It is true that by withdrawing to the Continent he left to others a responsibility which he was unwilling to meet. But it is not easy to see what other course he could have adopted under the circumstances in which he was placed. By his visit to the Continent and his subsequent resignation he sufficiently indicated his disapprobation of any penal proceedings; and it is well known that it was not until long after these events that the king became reconciled with him.

He had held office for nearly five years, and during this period he had taken a very active part in Parliament in defence of the ministerial measures, and had shared largely in the unpopularity which these measures had excited. But his management of the affairs of his own department had been able and judicious, and had given general satisfaction. "The functions of the Board, over which you have presided for a period of nearly five years," say the Directors of the East India Company in a letter to Mr. Canning, dated December 22d, 1820, "have been exercised with so much candor and courtesy, as well as with such invariable attention to the interests

both of the public and the Company, that they have been almost entirely divested of the invidious character which must ever, in some degree, attach to a controlling Board." At a meeting of the Court of Proprietors a few months later, a resolution was unanimously passed, approving this action of the Court of Directors, and expressing a high admiration of Mr. Canning's talents and a deep sense of his valuable services.

Early in the same year, and before these public discussions had reached their greatest heat, Mr. Canning experienced a heavy domestic affliction in the death of his eldest son, a young man of nineteen, and of much promise. Canning gave expression to his sorrow in an epitaph which has been much admired, and which describes the boy as being

"In youth, with more than learning's wisdom, wise!  
As sainted martyrs, patient to endure!"

But the finest image in the piece is borrowed from Burke's "Letter to a Noble Lord."

"By mortal sufferings now no more oppressed,  
Mount, sinless spirit, to thy destined rest!  
While I — reversed our nature's kindlier doom —  
Pour forth a father's sorrow on thy tomb."

Doubtless his grief at the loss of his son was among the causes of Canning's disinclination to participate in the Parliamentary discussions of this period. A part of the time he passed on the Continent with his family; and for nearly three years the only topics on which he spoke in the House of Commons were the Catholic Disabilities and Parliamentary Reform. In the spring of 1821 he warmly supported a bill for the removal of the Catholic Disabilities, which passed the House of Commons, but was lost in the House of Lords; and early in the following year he made a very admirable and cogent argument in favor of allowing the Roman Catholic peers to sit in Parliament. In the same month he opposed at great length, but with inferior ability, Lord John Russell's motion declaratory of the necessity of a reform in the representative system.

About this time Mr. Canning appears to have been considerably depressed, and to have felt that his political career was



nearly at an end ; and it was probably under this feeling that he accepted, in the early part of 1822, the appointment of Governor-General of India, tendered him by the East India Company. Certainly it would be difficult on any other hypothesis to account for his willingness to forego all hopes of personal advancement, and to accept a voluntary banishment to the most remote part of the British empire. Having determined, however, to accept the appointment, he paid a farewell visit to Liverpool, where he was received with every mark of attention, and made several speeches which attracted much notice. Two passages in particular were well suited to excite comment, from the fact that his name had been frequently mentioned in connection with the vacancy in the Cabinet created by the recent death of Lord Castlereagh, at that time known as the Marquis of Londonderry. In his speech at the dinner given him by the Canning Club, after stating that many obvious circumstances would make it more agreeable to remain in England, he went on to declare that he held that "a public man is, unless he can show cause of honor or duty to the contrary, bound to accept a trust which he is selected as competent to administer for the public interest." One week later, in a speech at another public dinner, he made a more distinct reference to the popular rumors, declaring that he knew as little as any man who heard him "of any arrangements likely to grow out of the present state of things," and at the same time declining to enter into any explanation of the decision which he might think it proper to take if these rumors proved true. "This only, gentlemen, I can frankly declare to you," he added, "that, in any such case, my decision would be founded upon an honest and impartial view of public considerations alone, and that it would be determined, not by a calculation of interests, but by a balance and comparison of duties."

On the 8th of September Lord Liverpool proposed an interview with Mr. Canning, and three days later offered him the seals of the vacant Secretaryship of Foreign Affairs. After some hesitation on his own part, and a good deal of intriguing on the part of Lord Eldon and other ultra Tories, he finally accepted the appointment, and entered at once on the dis-

charge of his new duties. The period during which Mr. Canning held the management of the foreign affairs is the most honorable part of his public life, and one of the most glorious in recent English history. For the first time since the dismissal of the Grenville Ministry a wise and liberal policy presided over the foreign relations of the country; the unfortunate policy which had allied England with the despotic powers of the Continent was reversed; Greece and a New World were called into being; and England was placed in her true position abreast of the advancing tide of liberal principles. This momentous change was effected solely by the genius and the courage of Mr. Canning. With a wise forecast, he saw that the new era which had opened with the fall of Napoleon demanded a departure from the traditional maxims of Tory state craft; and he did not hesitate to take at once the needful steps to liberalize the whole course of England's foreign policy.

At the moment of Lord Londonderry's death, all the arrangements had been completed for holding the Congress of Verona, and his Lordship was to have represented England in it. Mr. Canning's first duty, therefore, was to adopt such measures as should produce a dissolution of the Holy Alliance, and release England from her unfortunate connection with the Continental sovereigns. With this view he selected the Duke of Wellington as the representative of England, and furnished him with instructions carefully defining and limiting the share which he was at liberty to take in the deliberations of the Congress. The first subject in regard to which the change in the policy of England was made evident, was the condition of affairs in Spain. Anticipating a demand on the part of France that the other great powers should join in an armed intervention for the settlement of the political difficulties in Spain, Mr. Canning, in his despatch of the 27th of September, instructed the Duke of Wellington to declare, that "to any interference by force or menace on the part of the allies against Spain, come what may, his Majesty will not be a party." The demand was subsequently made, and, acting in accordance with his instructions, the Duke then withdrew from the Congress. This step had an important effect on the representatives of the four Con-

tinental powers; and they decided at once not to address a joint note to the Spanish government, but to prepare separate notes in general accordance with one another. Shortly afterward the French army crossed the Bidassoa and entered Spanish territory.

Under these circumstances Mr. Canning determined not to involve England in a war, while he sought by other means to restore the balance of power. He "resolved that, if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies," and that he would take measures for acknowledging the independence of such Spanish American Colonies as had successfully carried on the struggle with the mother country. Accordingly, in the summer of 1823, he endeavored to ascertain from Mr. Rush, then Minister to the Court of St. James, whether the government of the United States would make common cause with England in resisting any attempt on the part of the allied powers to effect the subjugation of the revolted Colonies. To this course Mr. Rush had no authority to accede, and he accordingly referred the matter to the government at Washington. But at the same time he proposed to Mr. Canning the immediate recognition of the independence of the Colonies, and a joint declaration on the part of Great Britain and the United States protesting against the ambitious designs of the Continental powers. Some further conferences took place, but without effecting any important result, as Mr. Canning was not prepared to adopt these measures; and it was not until July, 1824, that he fully committed himself to the recognition of the independence of Buenos Ayres. A similar decision followed in regard to Columbia and Mexico in December; and the divergence of policy from the line which England had hitherto pursued in concert with the other great powers became obvious to every one.

In the mean time, though he was so largely occupied in the management of the foreign policy, he was not unmindful of his Parliamentary duties as ministerial leader in the House of Commons. During the session of 1823 he twice spoke, with his accustomed eloquence and power, on the subject of the negotiations relative to Spain, and he also delivered a memo-

rable speech in opposition to the repeal of the Foreign Enlistment Bill. A few weeks later he spoke on Sir Fowell Buxton's motion for the abolition of the slave-trade. Another subject which had often engaged the attention of Parliament, the Catholic claims, was again discussed in this session. It now, however, derived fresh interest from the general belief among his opponents that Canning had sacrificed Catholic Emancipation to his ambition, and that he ought to have insisted on making the concession of the Catholic claims a Cabinet measure. His failure to do so exposed him to much obloquy.

It was in one of the numerous conversations in the House of Commons which preceded the discussion of this subject, that the memorable altercation between Canning and Brougham occurred. In a previous debate Lord Folkstone had strongly condemned Canning's foreign policy, and had even accused him of "truckling to France." To this attack the Secretary replied the same evening, with great bitterness, declaring that "he would never truckle to the noble Lord." A few nights afterward Mr. Brougham made a fierce attack on Canning, intimating that he had obtained office by a compromise with Lord Eldon in reference to the Catholic Question, and adding, "Is it the right honorable gentleman then who talks of not truckling to my noble friend,—he who has himself exhibited the most incredible specimen of monstrous truckling for the purpose of obtaining office which the whole history of political tergiversation can furnish?" Mr. Therry, who was an eye-witness of the scene, says that "the sarcastic tone, the vehement gesture, the deep and disdainful denouncement expressed in the whole of Mr. Brougham's delivery of this passage of his speech," cannot be described. As the words fell from the speaker's lips, Canning's changing countenance showed that the arrow had reached its mark; and, hastily rising, he exclaimed, "Sir, that is false!" Brougham at once attempted to leave the House, but he was prevented from doing so by his friends. The Sergeant-at-Arms was then summoned, and a motion was made, but subsequently withdrawn, that the two offenders against the proprieties of debate should be taken into custody. Satisfactory explanations, however, were at length made, and the matter was suffered to drop. Still, the recol-

lection of it must have long rankled in the breasts of both parties.

In the following year, also, Canning was a very frequent speaker, taking a principal part in the debates on the Address in Answer to the King's Speech at the opening of the session, on the delays and expenses in the Court of Chancery, on the condition of the slave population in the West Indies, on the evacuation of Spain by the French, on the Alien Bill, and on the memorable case of Missionary Smith. At the same time he was much occupied with the affairs of Spain, the Spanish Colonies, and other important questions of international policy, in regard to all of which he developed large and liberal views. It was easy to see that henceforth the sympathies of England, so far as they could be expressed, would be on the side of constitutional liberty, rather than with the advocates of high monarchical principles. Though still a Tory, Mr. Canning had adopted with few modifications the traditional Whig policy in reference to foreign affairs. The consequence was, that a feeling of personal hostility to him was excited in some of the foreign courts; and there is reason to believe that they intrigued to procure his overthrow. In these movements Prince Metternich was the leader,—his crafty disposition finding congenial occupation in such schemes. We need not be surprised, therefore, that Canning entertained a very low opinion of the Austrian minister, and took little pains to disguise it. "You shall hear what I think of him," he writes in a letter to Lord Granville, under date of March 11, 1825,— "that he is the greatest r—— and l—— on the Continent, perhaps in the civilized world." And in various other letters there are indications or explicit avowals of the same hostile feelings. But these intrigues had little effect. Canning's policy was too well sustained by public sentiment to render his removal expedient, or even safe; and early in 1825, while he was confined to his bed by a severe attack of the gout, Sir William Knighton, who held a confidential position in the royal household, sought an interview with him, in the course of which Sir William stated that the new foreign policy was approved by the king. Canning, as we learn from the papers printed by Mr. Stapleton, could not understand the precise

object of this visit, and we have no additional documents to throw light on the subject ; but it is certain that from this time Mr. Canning was more firmly established than ever in his position, and that his policy became still more vigorous and sharply defined.

The next two years were crowded with important events, and form one of the busiest and most anxious portions of Mr. Canning's life ; but we must pass rapidly over this eventful period. In 1825 occurred one of those terrible financial crises which occasionally overwhelm the commercial world, bringing to naught the most promising enterprises, and spreading failure and distress over a whole country. A period of unnatural expansion had given place to a period of almost unexampled depression. "The most wild and incoherent schemes," said Canning in the House of Commons in February, 1826, "were started, — projects which sprang with the dawn and expired before the setting of the sun in whose beams they glittered for a few hours and then fell : a puff of vapor sent them soaring toward the skies ; the puncture of a pin brought them to the earth." Large amounts of the precious metals had been exported, and the loss of gold and silver had been supplied by the issue of paper ; joint-stock companies of every description were formed ; the imports swelled to an alarming amount ; and in every kind of business speculation was rife. At length the day of reckoning came ; many of the country banks failed ; the paper currency depreciated ; the joint-stock companies disappeared from public notice, or were mentioned only as stupendous frauds ; almost every kind of merchandise declined in value ; and business nearly ceased. Under these circumstances it was natural that questions affecting trade and commerce should occupy much of the attention of Parliament ; and it was at this time that Mr. Huskisson brought forward some of his most important measures for relaxing the commercial system. Though Mr. Canning had little familiarity with commercial subjects, he warmly supported his friend's measures ; and among his most admired speeches is one on the subject of the silk trade. He also spoke on the Bank Charter Act, the Corn Laws, and other kindred topics.

Nor were these the only subjects which engaged his attention. The condition of Ireland, the Catholic Question, and the state of slavery in the West Indies, were all brought under discussion, and in regard to all Mr. Canning spoke freely and at length. But all these Parliamentary efforts dwindle into insignificance when compared with his two speeches delivered on the 12th of December, 1826, on the occasion of bringing down the king's message relative to the affairs of Portugal. Portugal was one of the oldest and most cherished allies of England, and by several existing treaties England was required to furnish assistance to her in the event of an invasion of her territory by France or Spain. In the latter part of 1826 this assistance was sought, on the ground of an invasion by bands of Portuguese rebels, armed, equipped, and trained in Spain. The result of this application was stated by Mr. Canning in the first of his two speeches with admirable clearness and force.

"On Sunday, the 3d of this month," he said, "we received from the Portuguese Ambassador a direct and formal demand of assistance against a hostile aggression from Spain. Our answer was, that, although rumors had reached us through France, his Majesty's government had not that accurate information — that official and precise intelligence of facts — on which they could properly found an application to Parliament. It was only on last Friday night that this precise information arrived. On Saturday his Majesty's confidential servants came to a decision. On Sunday that decision received the sanction of his Majesty. On Monday it was communicated to both Houses of Parliament; and this day, sir, [Tuesday,] at the hour in which I have the honor of addressing you, the troops are on their march for embarkation."

The same manly tone pervaded the whole of both speeches, and awakened a nearly unanimous response. The argument by which Mr. Canning justified his action was singularly clear, compact, and eloquent; and on no other occasion was his reasoning more persuasive, or his language more impassioned. The effect was such as might have been anticipated.

"Never," says Mr. Stapleton, who was an eyewitness, "were an assembly of men warmed into a higher pitch of enthusiasm than were the members of the House of Commons when they broke up on that

memorable night. He positively electrified his audience when he uttered those striking words, 'I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old.' The whole House were moved as if an electric shock had passed through them ; they all rose for a moment to look at him."

Certainly no English statesman had ever occupied a nobler position, or uttered a prouder boast. Even the elder Pitt, when organizing victory over half the world, and the greatest of his predecessors in their hours of mightiest influence, could point to no word or act of more impressive significance. Canning himself felt justly proud of the popularity which this memorable speech gave him.

"If I know anything of the House of Commons from thirty-three years' experience," he says in a letter to Lord Granville, dated December 14, 1826, "or if I may trust to what reaches me in report of feelings out of doors, the declaration of the obvious but unsuspected truth, that 'I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old,' has been more grateful to English ears and to English feelings, ten thousand times, than would have been the most satisfactory announcement of the intention of the French government to withdraw its army from Spain."

We need only add, that this speech and the vigorous measures adopted by Mr. Canning produced the desired result. The dignity of England was vindicated ; the incursions from Spain ceased ; and the independence of Portugal was secured. So completely were the objects of the expedition accomplished, that within a year and a half the British troops returned to England without having fired a gun.

This was the last great measure that Mr. Canning planned as Foreign Secretary. Early in February, 1827, Lord Liverpool was prostrated by a severe paralytic shock, which rendered him incapable of any kind of mental exercise, and even of resigning his office. Under these circumstances the government remained without a head for six weeks, until his Lordship was in a condition to tender his resignation. It was at once accepted ; and on the 27th of March Mr. Canning had a long interview with the king relative to the formation of a new ministry. In the course of this interview Mr. Canning announced his determination not to hold the second



place in any other administration, and recommended to his Majesty the formation of a Cabinet which should offer a united opposition to the Catholic claims, at the same time tendering his own resignation. We are not aware that the sincerity of this advice has been often called in question ; but in the existing condition of affairs it was strangely inconsistent, and the only intelligible explanation is, that Mr. Canning was firmly persuaded in his own mind that such a ministry could not last. In the event of its overthrow, he probably felt that he should be recalled to power under circumstances which would give him increased strength in Parliament and the country. This explanation doubtless detracts much from the magnanimity of his advice ; but there is nothing in his life or speeches which renders it improbable that he should adopt such a policy. No immediate result flowed from this interview ; and various plans were discussed with a view of avoiding the difficulties growing out of the Catholic Question. At length, on the 10th of April, Mr. Canning was empowered to draw up the plan of an administration, and two days later it was announced in the House of Commons that he had accepted the appointment of First Lord of the Treasury. His acceptance of office was accompanied by the resignation of Mr. Peel, who had very frankly told Mr. Canning that their want of agreement on the subject of the Catholic claims would compel him to retire if Mr. Canning were made prime minister. At the same time five other Cabinet ministers, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Eldon, Lord Westmoreland, Lord Bathurst, and Lord Melbourne, threw up their offices, with the apparent design of embarrassing the new premier. This scheme, however, failed, and after some fruitless negotiations a new government was formed. Mr. Canning united in his own person the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer ; Sir John Copley, who, as Lord Campbell sarcastically remarks, was “ still in dreadful apprehension of the Pope,” was raised to the Chancellorship and created Lord Lyndhurst. Lord Harrowby retained his former office as President of the Council ; the Duke of Portland became Privy Seal, in place of the Earl of Westmoreland ; Lord Dudley succeeded Mr. Canning in the Foreign Office ; Sturges Bourne took Mr. Peel’s place

as Home Secretary ; Mr. Robinson, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, was called to the Upper House as Viscount Gode- rich, and made Colonial Secretary ; Mr. Huskisson as Presi- dent of the Board of Trade, and Charles Winn as President of the Board of Control, retained their places ; and Lord Palmerston was raised to the rank of a Cabinet minister, though he still remained Secretary at War.

During the progress of these changes Parliament was not in session ; but it met again on the 1st of May. At the hour of meeting on that day every avenue to the House of Commons swarmed with spectators, anxious to see the new premier. "The House," says Hansard, "was crowded to excess, and such of the members as could not find accommodation below resorted to the galleries. To these were added several peers and reverend prelates whose curiosity had induced them to be present at this opening act of the new administration." Prominent among them was the Catholic Duke of Norfolk, the hereditary Earl Marshal of England, and head of the British peerage. On the ministerial benches were Mr. Brougham, Sir Francis Burdett, Lord Stanley, Sir Robert Wilson, and other prominent Whigs, who thus indicated their intention to support the new minister, while the late ministers and their adherents generally passed to the left of the Speaker. As soon as the House proceeded to business Mr. Peel rose and made a manly statement of the reasons which had influenced his recent conduct. This speech opened the whole subject of the late changes ; and among the members who participated in the debate were Sir Francis Burdett and Mr. Brougham, both of whom avowed their intention to support the government, Mr. George Dawson, who attacked the new minister with much asperity, and Mr. Canning himself. His speech on this occasion was not long, but it comprised a very clear narrative of the recent transactions, and an able vindication of his own course. From this time until Parliament was prorogued, on the 2d of July, Mr. Canning lived in an atmosphere of unwonted excitement, and with all his powers taxed to their utmost limits. "My occupations for the twenty-four hours," he wrote to Mr. Gladstone on the 28th of May, "are and have been for the last two months more

almost than either the compass of that time or my physical strength is adequate to." Constantly worried as he was by teasing attacks from the adherents of the late ministers, and overwhelmed by official cares, his health and strength rapidly declined. Yet he was still active and energetic, and between the 27th of March and the close of the session he spoke more than thirty times. Several of these speeches were of considerable length, and bore the marks of careful preparation.

The attacks on the ministers were not, however, confined to the House of Commons; and by far the most effective speech against them was that delivered by Earl Grey in the House of Lords on the 10th of May. Doubtless his Lordship was unjust to the new premier in several respects, yet no one is competent to form a just estimate of the character and services of Mr. Canning who is not familiar with this masterly exposition of the grounds on which the great Whig Earl withheld his confidence from the new government. Beginning with an expression of his pain at being compelled to separate from those friends with whom he had acted throughout the whole of his political life, and for whom he still entertained the most sincere and ardent affection, his Lordship took occasion at the very outset to declare his want of sympathy with the late ministers. "On the contrary," he said, "if there be any persons in this House to whom my principles are more decidedly opposed than to any other, they are those whom I have lately heard professing themselves to be the Opposition to the government. Not only do my principles prevent me from wishing to do anything, but they will induce me not to do anything, that may promote their return to power." He then proceeded to state and explain his first reason for distrusting the new ministers,—that he did not see in the persons composing the administration, or in the principles on which it was formed, anything to justify a belief that the Catholic cause would advance a single step in consequence of the recent change. "I therefore, my Lords," he declared, "find myself placed in a situation which makes it quite impossible for me, feeling a sense of public duty, recollecting what I did in the year 1807, recollecting what I did in the year 1809, and recollecting what I wrote and what I signed in the

year 1812,—I say, which makes it quite impossible for me, without violating every pledge and promise I have given, without breaking every undertaking I have made, without being guilty of the greatest inconsistency, to join in a general declaration of support to an administration such as that which is at present formed.” He then passed to a consideration of Mr. Canning’s foreign policy, ridiculing as “an idle and empty boast” the famous declaration respecting the Spanish Colonies, and declaring that neither in respect to Spain and Portugal, nor upon the general foreign policy of the country, could he feel any confidence in the right honorable gentleman’s administration. Finally, he examined with great thoroughness and ability Mr. Canning’s alleged advocacy of civil and religious liberty, asserting that, “If my recollection of the events of the last thirty years do not fail me, it will be found that there has not been an invasion of civil liberty during that time, of which the right honorable gentleman has not been the prominent supporter.” The charge was undeniably true; but his Lordship failed to perceive that Mr. Canning’s opinions had been undergoing a progressive change, and that he had been constantly drawing nearer to the opinions and principles from which Lord Grey himself had never swerved. The effect of this speech was very great; and more than any other speech it wounded Canning, whose excitable nature, made more sensitive by illness and exhausting labor, could ill sustain so severe an attack. He did not attempt to answer it at the time, and he never had another opportunity. Within three months, his lips were forever sealed by death.

Shortly after the close of the session he attended a Cabinet dinner at Lord Lyndhurst’s, at Wimbledon. Here he caught a severe cold, which confined him to his bed for several days and seriously alarmed his friends, though few if any anticipated a fatal termination. On the 20th of July he removed to the villa of the Duke of Devonshire at Chiswick, in the hope that a change of air would prove beneficial. But even that pure atmosphere could not restore his wasted energies; and human aid was equally powerless. After fluctuating for a brief period, he died on the 8th of August, in the fifty-eighth year of his age. His body was removed to London; and on

the 16th, attended by a long procession of political and personal friends, it was borne to its final resting-place in the north transept of Westminster Abbey. There, at the feet of the younger Pitt, were laid the mortal remains of the greatest of Pitt's disciples and followers.

The public sorrow at his death was testified by a suitable provision for his family by Parliament, and by the erection of two statues, one in bronze by Westmacott in New Palace Yard, and the other in marble by Chantrey in Westminster Abbey. His death at this time was, indeed, a great public calamity. He was in the full maturity of his powers; he was strong in the confidence of Parliament and the country; his principles had attained a liberality by which they had never before been characterized; a new and more glorious career seemed to be opening before him; and his ministry contained no one strong enough to carry forward the policy which he had inaugurated. "There is an end, I fear, for the present," wrote Jeffrey to Lord Cockburn, "of this new and bold experiment of a liberal or rational government, for Wellington and Peel, I think, must come back, and then where can we be but where we were before Liverpool's demise, or still further back in the blessed one of Castlereagh?" Nevertheless, after Canning's death a feeble attempt was made to reconstruct the Cabinet; but the master's hand was wanting. The ministry soon fell to pieces; and the Tories once more returned to power. Still, all was not lost. The tide of liberal principles had advanced too far to be resisted or rolled back; and a little more than three years after Canning's death, Lord Grey became prime minister.

Canning has often been pronounced by his admirers the greatest of modern English orators, and perhaps with justice. He had not indeed the exuberant imagination of Burke, the consummate skill as a debater which characterized Fox, the perfect self-command of Pitt, the brilliancy of Sheridan, the withering sarcasm of Brougham, or the lofty and sustained eloquence of Grey. But he had a command of the House of Commons which Burke never acquired; he exhibited a livelier imagination and a quicker fancy than Fox; his speeches were more carefully prepared, and were adorned by a more various

reading, than were those of Pitt; his judgment was more solid than Sheridan's; he was a more polished and graceful speaker than Brougham; and he possessed resources in his keen wit, his sharp invective, and his playful humor, which Grey rarely summoned to his aid, but of which Canning made frequent and effective use. His voice and manner were both good. "His expressive countenance," says Sir James Mackintosh, "varied with the changes of his eloquence; his voice, flexible and articulate, had as much compass as his mode of speaking required. In the calm part of his speeches his attitude and gesture might have been selected by a painter to represent grace rising towards dignity." On the hustings and in the House of Commons he was equally an impressive and persuasive speaker. Some of his finest and most memorable speeches were addressed to his constituents at Liverpool; and his best speeches in the House of Commons are models of Parliamentary eloquence, — clear, compact, and vigorous, yet even now charming the reader by their brilliancy and their polished diction. For some time after his entrance into Parliament he did not speak often, and his speeches, though able and brilliant, lacked some of the higher qualities of statesmanship and oratory, and were vitiated by a flippancy of tone from which he never wholly freed himself, and which in a measure justified Sydney Smith's description of him as "a pert London joker." It was only by slow degrees that he rose to the position he afterward attained, and became the acknowledged leader of the House of Commons.

His language was chaste and harmonious, and there is scarcely an instance in which he descended to the coarse and degrading images too often found in Burke's speeches. On the contrary, his metaphors and illustrations were almost invariably happy, and they were sometimes grand and striking, rivalling indeed the loftiest flights of Burke's imagination. Such was his memorable description of the effects of Wellington's victory at Vittoria.

"The mighty deluge," he exclaimed, "by which the Continent had been overwhelmed, began to subside. The limits of nations were again visible, and the spires and turrets of ancient establishments began to reappear above the subsiding waters. It was this victory which had defined these objects, so lately involved in overwhelming confusion."

A scarcely less daring metaphor occurs in a speech on the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, in 1825, while discussing the objection that the Irish Catholics regarded their priests and their political leaders with a veneration bordering on idolatry.

"But fortunately," he said, "the cure of this crime (if it be one) is in our hands. Let us open to them the sanctuary of the law; let us lift up the veil which shuts them out from the British Constitution, and show them the spirit of freedom which dwells within, the object of our own veneration. Let us call them to partake in the same rites with which our purer worship is celebrated. Let us do this, and, depend upon it, we shall speedily wean them from their present political idolatry, and leave deserted the spurious shrines at which they now bow down before their Doyles and their O'Connells."

His wit, however, was his most obvious characteristic; but where nearly every speech affords numerous striking illustrations, it is not easy to make an adequate selection. A single instance, therefore, must suffice. Thus, in his speech on the state of the Silk Trade, he ridicules those who accused him of departing from the principles of Mr. Pitt.

"It is singular to remark," he said, "how ready some people are to admire in a great man the exception rather than the rule of his conduct. Such perverse worship is like the idolatry of barbarous nations, who can see the noonday splendor of the sun without emotion; but who, when he is in eclipse, come forward with hymns and cymbals to adore him. Thus there are those who venerate Mr. Pitt less in the brightness of his meridian glory, than under his partial obscurations, and who gaze on him with the fondest admiration when he has accidentally ceased to shine."

The same characteristic is apparent in many of his sarcastic allusions to his opponents, where one scarcely knows which is the more noticeable, the keenness of wit or the weight of sarcasm, as in his reply to Mr. Brougham in the debate on the King's Speech at the opening of the session in February, 1825. In his speech Mr. Brougham had claimed for the Whigs the credit of the various reforms recently adopted. To this claim Mr. Canning very happily retorted:—

"It does happen that the honorable and learned member being not unfrequently a speaker in this House, nor very concise in his speeches,

and touching occasionally, as he proceeds, on almost every subject within the range of his imagination, as well as making some observations on the matter in hand, and having at different periods proposed and supported every innovation of which the law or constitution of the country is susceptible, — it is impossible to innovate without appearing to borrow from him. Either, therefore, we must remain forever absolutely locked up as in a northern winter, or we must break our way out by some mode already suggested by the honorable and learned gentleman.”

In the statement of great truths or just sentiments he was equally felicitous. Thus, in a debate on the Regency Resolutions in January, 1811, in which he thought the memory of Pitt had been unjustly assailed by the friends of Fox, he said: —

“Why should the admiration of one be incompatible with justice to the other? Why cannot we cherish the remembrance of the respective objects of our veneration, leaving to each other a similar freedom? For my part, I disclaim such a spirit of intolerance. Be it the boast and characteristic of the school of Pitt, that, however provoked by illiberal and unjust attacks upon his memory, whether in speeches in this House, or in calumnies out of it, they will never so far forget the respect due to him or to themselves as to be betrayed into reciprocal illiberality and injustice, — that they disdain to retaliate upon the memory of Mr. Pitt’s great rival.”

Again, in 1824, in a debate on the Alien Bill, when accused of subserviency to foreign powers, he emphatically declared, that, “dearly as he valued all the ties by which European nations were held together, there was not a connection that he would not sever at once, rather than allow any measure brought forward in that House to originate in a foreign source.”

Though it is not easy to determine the exact nature and extent of Mr. Canning’s influence in regard to all the great questions agitated while he held an important place in public affairs, yet the general direction of that influence may be readily discerned, and its importance may be accurately measured. Entering the arena, as he did, under the auspices of Mr. Pitt, and at a time when liberal principles were in very ill repute, his whole life was a struggle to free himself from



the constraint of Tory traditions and prejudices. In this struggle he was so far successful as to liberate his mind from many of the narrow and illiberal notions which he had imbibed when he entered Parliament; and at the close of his life there were but few points of difference between himself and the Whigs. Under his guidance the domestic policy of his country was sundered from those bigoted maxims which he had himself upheld in earlier years. At the same time he inaugurated a very different foreign policy from that which Lord Castlereagh had adopted, and which had degraded England into a mere subservient ally of the despotic powers of the Continent. No man did more to enlarge the principles and to liberalize the measures of the Tory party. He first placed England in that path of enlightened progress which she has since pursued. It is true that the distinctive body of his personal adherents was not numerous; but it included some men of rare intellectual force and ability, and among them were Mr. Huskisson, Lord Palmerston, and Charles Grant, afterward Lord Glenelg. At the close of his career he had the support of nearly the whole body of the Whigs, and of most of the respectable journals throughout the country.

In regard, however, to two great questions, Mr. Canning never adopted a liberal policy. Through his whole life he was the unswerving opponent of nearly every measure of relief to the Dissenters, and of every attempt to reform the representative system. "Of popular representation," he said in his speech in the Music Hall, in Liverpool, in June, 1818, "I think we have enough for every purpose of jealous, steady, corrective, efficient control over the acts of that monarchical power, which, for the safety and for the peace of the community, is lodged in one sacred family, and descendible from sire to son." And in the last year of his life, after he had become prime minister, he stated his intentions in respect to these two questions in the most unequivocal language. "I am asked," he said in his place in Parliament, "what I mean to do on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. Why, I say, to oppose it, — to oppose it to the end of my life in this House, as hitherto I have done. I am asked what I intend to do respecting the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. My answer is,

to oppose it too." Yet notwithstanding this explicit declaration, we entertain little doubt that he would ultimately have adopted more liberal views in regard to both of these great questions. It is indeed no small blemish on Mr. Canning's reputation, that he should so pertinaciously have resisted the weight of argument opposed to him in reference to these subjects, and that he should have remained satisfied with such fallacies as are brought forward in his speech at Liverpool in opposition to Parliamentary Reform. With so vigorous an intellect, and with his increasing liberality of opinions, it is curious that he should have been willing to sacrifice the cause of the Dissenters for the chance of thereby promoting Catholic Emancipation, and that he should have prognosticated the downfall of monarchical institutions in England from the disfranchisement of Gatton and Old Sarum. His opposition retarded, though it could not prevent, the triumph of these measures; and his fame lacks the crowning glory which it would have derived from his successful advocacy of them.

Like many other persons of a quick and lively imagination, Canning was peculiarly sensitive, and keenly alive to ridicule. On the occasion of his marriage, it is related that he sent to the different newspapers, requesting them not to insert any squibs in reference to it. In temper he was quick and irritable; but he was of a magnanimous spirit, and when the first gust of anger had passed, he was ready to make reparation for any unintentional injury which he had committed, or to forgive any which he had received. His unfortunate duel with Lord Castlereagh, and his collision with Brougham in the House of Commons, are painful illustrations of the least amiable traits in his character. Yet he was a faithful friend, and above reproach in all his domestic relations. In early life he mingled much in society, and was one of its brightest ornaments; but in later years he withdrew almost entirely from it, and, according to Lord Brougham, the reputation which he long enjoyed as a diner-out of the first order rests on no solid basis. To be a great and influential statesman was the sole object of his ambition; and to the attainment of this object he devoted all his energies.